

**Dimond Improvement Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, 9/10//2020**

Board Members present: Jay Ashford, Zandile Christian, Fran Donohue, Tomasz Finc, Paul Epstein, Chris Harper, Julie Johnson, Marjorie Jones, Marion Mills, Ryan Romaneski, Ben Stein-Lebovitz, Daniel Swafford, JoAnn Tracht-Rawson, Victoria Wake

Board Members Not Present: Kevin Whittinghill

Guest: Amauri Collins-McMurray, City Council District 4 Office

Meeting commenced at 7:02 p.m.

1. Approval of September Agenda

ACTION: After motion made by Tomasz, and seconded by Chris, the meeting agenda was approved as presented by Ryan.

2. Approval of August Minutes

ACTION: Approval of August minutes was tabled to the October meeting so revisions can be made.

3. Chair’s Report

Discussion led by Ryan. Ryan thanked the Board generally for sending notes in advance of the meeting.

Ryan specifically thanked Victoria for suggesting to set aside time during meetings for what is sometimes referred to as “for the good of the order”, that is, an opportunity for Board members to share items that may not fit neatly into the agenda, such what they are working on, what is going on in the Dimond, and even to offer a “thank you” or appreciation, and so on.

After soliciting “for the good of the order”:

- a. Jay offered that Jenni Ziliac from NCPC 22X invited him to meet with her leadership group. During that meeting, via Zoom, on Saturday, 9/5, Jay met the new Community Resource Officer, Gustavo Plasencia. Jay said he had a good feeling coming out of that meeting.
- b. Marjorie offered that the mural facing the Bank of America parking lot co-sponsored by the DIA is really looking nice.
- c. Victoria thanked Paul for preparing the August Minutes.
- d. Ryan thanked Board members who submitted agenda items. He also specifically thanked JoAnn for providing a detailed pre-read of the agenda.

4. District 4 Updates

Amauri Collins-McMurray, Community Liaison to Councilmember Sheng Thao, reported the following:

a. Bombera.

Approval of the agreement to convert the former Dimond fire station into a restaurant, Bombera, should be going back to the City Council in September. There has been a delay on the Council's vote because of a lingering issue as to when the restaurant should close. There had been discussion about having the closing time align with other restaurants in the Dimond, most of which close at 10:00 p.m. But the project's lender does not want to restrict business hours, and is therefore requesting an 11:00 p.m. closing time. Amuari does not expect the later closing time to pose a problem for the Council.

Bombera is tentatively scheduled to open in late November 2020.

Amauri offered that a letter from the Board in support of the project would be helpful. The letter need not be detailed. It can simply express support.

b. Tennis Courts And Fence At Dimond Park.

There has been a delay in completing the tennis court and fence repair in Dimond Park for two reasons. One is poor air quality. The second is that the vendor hired for the repairs has not prioritized Oakland among its various projects. Councilmember Thao does not know why. Once the vendor gets to Oakland, it will have several courts to repair - Montclair, Elmhurst, Dimond, and two others. When the Dimond Park repair starts will simply depend on where Dimond Park falls on the vendor's list. Nevertheless, it is expected that the Dimond Park court repair will be completed in November, depending on COVID and air quality.

The project manager for the tennis court repair project told Amauri that there are additional funds to do something with water fountains in Dimond Park. Amauri is therefore soliciting proposals for water fountain locations in the park. Amauri asked if the Board wanted to consider a new or replacement water fountain near the tennis courts.

Also, the repair to the tennis court fence in Dimond Park is being paid for with insurance proceeds, so it will not impact Councilmember Thao's budget.

c. Trees

Sarah Fine of the City's Department of Transportation is aware of concerns regarding trees and street repaving.

d. CORE

Councilmember Thao asked if any Board members would like to be part of the CORE program (Communities of Oakland Respond to Emergencies).

e. Business Improvement District

In September, Councilmember Thao expects to receive additional information regarding the DIA's Business Improvement District feasibility study application.

5. DPW Responsiveness

Discussion led by Victoria. Victoria, with community members David Coleman and John Zaro, are planning to meet with Councilperson Thao to have a focused discussion about how the 311 system and the Department of Public Works ("DPW") function, or doesn't function, in the Dimond. Victoria reported that there have been ongoing challenges with getting the DPW to attend to job requests. It seems that some people succeed in getting the DPW's attention, but only after a lot of campaigning.

Victoria wanted the Board to be aware of the intended meeting, and solicited ideas for discussion. Chris suggested that, rather than focus on particulars, such as garbage cans not getting picked up, the planned meeting should focus on broader, systemic issues with the DPW.

Zandile reported that she is aware that the DPW has classified a work request as "closed" when in fact it has not been completed.

Victoria praised Amauri and Councilmember Thao, who have helped with efforts to engage the DPW. But, she said, having to enlist a council member in order to get the DPW's attention is not the best way for the system to work.

Amauri said that 311 is a kind of triage station. Upon receipt of a request, 311 directs it to the City department responsible for the particular job. It is thereafter the responsibility of the supervisor of the assigned department to monitor the progress of a job.

Amauri reported that 311 had a server crash 2-3 weeks ago. Consequently, he said, if an email was sent to 311 during a certain period, there is a good chance that it was not received. Amauri has met with Sabrina Jones, the 311 Manager. Amauri reported that Ms. Jones told him that there is an unusually high number of 311 requests from Councilmember Thao's office.

6. Head-Royce Proposal to Reopen Slow Streets

Discussion led by JoAnn. Head-Royce advised the Neighborhood Liaison Committee ("NLC"), on which JoAnn sits, that the school had submitted a waiver application to the County to open the school for in-person classes. According to JoAnn, the Oakland Department of Transportation ("DOT") recommended that Head-Royce advise parents to use major

thoroughfares, such as Lincoln and MacArthur, for “pick ups” and “drop offs”. If necessary, parents can use designated “slow streets” as long the speed limit is maintained at 15 miles per hour.

According to JoAnn, the Neighborhood Steering Committee (NSC), an organized group of neighbors is opposed to the idea of permitting Head-Royce parents to use any “slow streets”. The NSC is concerned about safety, particularly with children playing in the street during recess now that they are at home during the school day.

If the NSC writes a letter to the DOT opposing any authorizing for Head-Royce families to use slow streets, JoAnn would like the DIA to submit a letter supporting the NSC.

ACTION: After discussion by the Board, which included supporting not opening the neighborhood “slow street” to Head Royce parents, JoAnn made the following motion: If the NSC is going to write a letter to the DOT asking Head-Royce to find options other than opening up designated slow streets, the DIA should submit a letter to the DOT in support of NSC desire to preserving slow streets. Victoria seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of the Board members present, Chris Harper abstaining. JoAnn said that she will write the proposed letter.

7. Oaktobefest Next Steps

Discussion led by Ryan. Ryan thanked Daniel for all of his work in creating an Oaktobefest plan for this unusual year. He also thanked Kevin for his leadership and Ben for the work he has put into the online ordering and fulfillment apps.

The goals for this year’s Oaktobefest are to continue the Oaktobefest tradition, contribute to the community at large, and contribute to the businesses that make up the Dimond.

Discussion led by Daniel. Oaktobefest this year will be a month-long promotion of Dimond District businesses, culminating in a focused, single day Oaktobefest at-home experience, with a dine and drink delivery option. The cost of delivery will be “baked” into the price. The promotion phase will begin in early October.

There will be two ways for restaurants to participate: The first is that a restaurant can choose to be featured in the delivery service. This option would be limited to only one or two restaurants that lend themselves to delivery, such as Dimond Slice. The second is that a restaurant can opt to feature a themed “special” during the promotional month. Businesses participating in this fashion will be encouraged to feature a seasonal item that could incorporate German elements, or simply feature a particular food item for the month.

All Dimond businesses, whether or not they participate in Oaktobefest in any fashion, will be marketed and promoted.

Daniel suggested that each delivery include a “leave behind” relating to the DIA, the goal being to reinforce DIA membership and solicit opportunities to contribute.

Daniel shared a link (<https://kristencaven.com/creations/music/the-dirndl-diaspora/>) to a play by Kirsten Caven that connects the themes of Oakttoberfest and the history of the Diamond District. Kirsten Caven is getting ready to premier it.

Wrap Up by Ryan. Because Oakttoberfest will be unique this year due to the pandemic, Ryan would like the name of the festival to be changed in some respect for this year only. He and Committee members are working on name alternatives. Also, because revenue is expected to be substantially reduced from prior years, there will be an effort to control costs by soliciting “sweat equity” from Board members, particularly the Communications Committee. There will also be a need for hands-on assistance packing up beer and, hopefully, making deliveries on the designated day.

8. Strategic Planning: Vision, Mission, Values, Goals

Discussion led by Ryan. Ryan was excited to share the great progress that the Strategic Planning Committee has made since the last meeting. Ryan thanked Jay and Victoria for leading key pieces of the development of the Strategic Plan. He also thanked Julie and Paul for their participation.

Discussion Regarding “Vision” Portion of Strategic Plan led by Jay. The proposed “Vision” statement -- “For Oakland’s Diamond District to be a vibrant, safe, and beautiful place for everyone to live, work, shop, and play” -- was discussed. JoAnn moved to approve the Vision statement, which was seconded by Jay. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion Regarding “Mission” Statement For Strategic Plan led by Jay: Jay advised that in the context of a strategic plan, an organization’s “Mission” is what the organization needs to do to become what it wants to be and accomplish. Its “Vision” is what the organization wants to be or accomplish as a result of conducting its mission. He likened the vision to the rising sun as you are driving down the road.

Jay presented the following two options for the DIA’s Mission, noting that there could be others, and that they are subject to revision:

Option 1: We are a community-based, non-profit organization, with membership and participation open to all. We work to bring together local residents, businesses, agencies, and other groups to engage in collective efforts to beautify our neighborhood, promote a thriving commercial district, improve public safety, and build a stronger sense of community and belonging.

Option 2: We are a community-based, non-profit organization, with membership and participation open to all. We work to bring together residents, businesses, agencies, and other groups to engage in community projects, to address issues of common concern,

and to cultivate a friendly, inclusive neighborhood.

ACTION: Jay moved to approve Option 1 as the Mission statement without the word “local” and before “residents”. Tomasz seconded the motion. After a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Discussion Regarding “Values” Portion of Strategic Plan led by Victoria. Victoria advised that the “Values” section of a strategic plan reflects the organization’s aspirations, its “code of conduct”. In other words, it consists of the words that the organization will return to when it hits a wall or needs guidance.

After reviewing and analyzing responses to the recent community survey, the Strategic Planning Committee settled on five “values” for the Board to consider: Inclusiveness, Respect, Collaboration, Leadership and Impact.

ACTION: JoAnn moved to approve the Strategic Plan’s Values to consist of the above five words. Jay seconded the motion. After a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Next Step led by Ryan. The next stage of the Strategic Plan development process will be identifying strategic goals, that is, how an organization gets to its vision. Ryan will send a link to a survey to collect input from the Board. The survey will ask the Board to engage in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) analysis. In other words, the survey will ask the Board to consider the DIA’s strengths and weaknesses. What are the DIA’s future opportunities? What are some threats to the organization?

9. Letter In Support of Bombera

Discussion led by Ryan. Ryan prepared a letter of support to Councilmember Thao for Bombera on behalf of the DIA to extend the Disposition and Development Agreement.

Jay moved to approve the letter. Marjorie seconded the motion. After a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

10. WIP Reports

There was insufficient time for detailed WIP Reports. For the financial report, the Board was directed to financial statements linked to the WIP Report.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Submitted By: Paul Epstein
Approved 12/10/20